DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 296 524 EC 210 292

AUTHOR Foster, Susan
TITLE The Impact and Outcome of Mainstreamed and Residential School Programs.
INSTITUTION Rochester Inst. of Technology, NY. National Technical Inst. for the Deaf.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE May 87
NOTE 29p.; A product of the Office for Postsecondary Career Studies and Institutional Research.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Graduates; *Deafness; *Educational Experience; Educational Quality; *Hearing Impairments; Higher Education; Interviews; *Mainstreaming; Outcomes of Education; Partial Hearing; Program Effectiveness; *Residential Schools; School Choice; Social Adjustment; *Social Experience; Social Integration; Social Isolation; Student Attitudes; Student Experience
IDENTIFIERS National Technical Institute for the Deaf

ABSTRACT

Twenty-five graduates of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf were interviewed concerning their mainstream and residential school experiences. Respondents had an average age of 27 at the time of the interviews. Topics of discussion included classroom experiences, social interactions with other students, and participation in extracurricular activities. The 12 mainstreamed students described obstacles to their academic success, strategies used to overcome those obstacles, and the impact of their efforts in terms of extensive time devoted to school work and feelings of social isolation. The 13 residential program students indicated that they were not entirely satisfied with the quality of the education they received, but seemed to enjoy a greater sense of participation, camaraderie, and interaction with peers than did respondents from the mainstream. In general, the selection of one program over another involved "trading" academic opportunity for social growth. In addition, both mainstream and residential schools played a critical role in implementing a "hidden curriculum" in which students learn about what it means to be deaf in a hearing world. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED296524

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- ☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

The Impact and Outcome of Mainstreamed and Residential School Programs

Susan Foster

National Technical Institute for the Deaf

at

Rochester Institute of Technology

Office for Postsecondary Career Studies

and

Institutional Research

May, 1987

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G. Long

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The research reported in this document was produced at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf in the course of an agreement between the Rochester Institute of Technology and the U.S. Office of Education.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to learn about mainstream and residential school programs from the perspective of the deaf person, and to present the experiences of respondents in their own words. Data for this report were collected through open-ended, in depth interviews with 25 graduates from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology (NTID at RIT).

It was learned that there is an element of "trading" one kind of growth for another in respondents' descriptions of their school experiences. In general, this trade seems to be one of academic versus social opportunity. For example, respondents from mainstream programs often settled for restricted or superficial peer interaction in return for what they perceived to be enhanced academic opportunities. Respondents from schools for the deaf, on the other hand, had few complaints about the opportunity for social interaction with peers. However, they were less satisfied with the quality of the education available to them at these schools.

In addition, it was found that deaf students learned more than the three "R's" in school. In particular, they learn about what it means to be deaf in a hearing world. Both mainstream and residential schools play a critical role in implementing this "hidden curriculum." Through interactions with hearing students, teachers and others, deaf students discover that they are different, and learn to manage what Goffman (1963) has called the "stigmatized" social identity which the so-called "normals" have assigned to them. At the same

time, residential schools offer the deaf student an alternative community in which deafness is not a handicap. Further research is recommended which explores the long term impact of different kinds of school environments in addition to the more immediate consequences of participation for deaf students.

INTRODUCTION

The debate over mainstream versus residential school programs for deaf students is not new[1]. However, passage of PL 94-142 which insures the right of all students with disabilities to an education in "the least restrictive environment" has added fuel to the fire. One major focus of research in the area of education of deaf people has, therefore, been the assessment of mainstream and residential programs, with a focus on the impact of these programs on the academic and personal/social development of students.

In general, this research has found that deaf students in integrated classes have better academic achievement than their peers in special programs (Kluwin and Moores, 1985; Mertens, in press). Moreover, it is not clear that integration, per se, can explain these differences. For example, Allen and Osborn (1984) conclude that, while students who were integrated generally performed better on standardized tests, "the actual proportion of achievement variance accounted for by integration status alone was very small" (p. 112).

Kluwin and Moores (1985) developed a post hoc model of the instructional process in an effort to account for differences between students who were mainstreamed and those who were not. Their model includes such factors as high expectations, exposure to greater quantities of demanding material, the availability of individual student support, and training in academic content for mainstreamed class teachers. They further note that these factors are not intrinsic to the integrated class, and conclude that all educational environments can and should foster excellence in instruction for deaf students. Similarly, Mertens and Kluwin (1986) conducted a study to determine factors which might help to explain differences in academic achievement of deaf high school students, and conclude that the initial ability of the student, in combination with family factors, exposure to course content, teacher training and experience, and the quality of teaching, are the most critical determinants of success.

---

[1] *The term "mainstream" is used in this paper to describe the range of educational environments available to deaf students within public or private schools serving primarily hearing students, including special classes, resource rooms, and support services within the regular classroom. The term "residential" is used to describe separate school programs for deaf students. Historically, these schools were almost entirely residential. As a result, the term "residential" often is still used to refer to programs run through or by these institutions, even though many have converted to a day program model or a combined day/residential model.*

Other studies have focused on the social and emotional impact of mainstream and special school programs on deaf students. For example, Farrugia and Austin (1980) report higher self-concepts for students in residential schools than for their peers in self-contained classes. Of particular interest is their reference to the "unwritten curriculum" (Garreston, 1977). This term refers to the range of informal interactions which students routinely encounter through school, including conversations on the bus, interactions in the halls and cafeteria, and participation in clubs, sports and social activities. While these kinds of interactions are available to students in residential programs, the authors conclude that "many of these environments for social and emotional growth are closed to many deaf students in public school programs" (p. 540).

Antia (1982) has noted that physical proximity of deaf and hearing students is not enough to insure interaction. A study by Mertens (1986), designed to examine differences in the educational process between mainstream and self-contained classes, documents this idea clearly; over the course of 51 mainstreamed class periods, trained observers recorded no interaction between deaf and hearing students.

Other dimensions of the intellectual, social and emotional adjustment of deaf students in mainstreamed settings have been studied. For example, Reich, Hambleton and Houldin (1977) studied the effects of mainstreaming over time. They found that, while integration is beneficial to the academic and linguistic development of the deaf student, personal and social problems may increase. Similarly, Ladd, Munson, and Miller (1984) indicate that structured activities to support interaction and length of time in the mainstreamed setting are both important to the successful social and emotional accommodation of mainstreamed deaf students. However, they also note that "many students who participated in integrated friendships had little or no out of school contact, a finding which calls into question the strength or quality of these relationships" (p. 428).

In summary, the research to date generally indicates that deaf students in mainstreamed classes have higher levels of academic achievement. On the other hand, there is also evidence that the personal and social adjustment of these students suffers, especially over time. In particular, the research suggests that meaningful

social interactions and friendships between deaf and hearing students are difficult to achieve, even in settings in which integration is an acknowledged goal.

Most of these studies involve the application of quantifiable measures of academic and social development to deaf students, including psychometric evaluations and structured questionnaires or interviews. There is less research which examines the impact of different educational models from the perspective of the deaf student, or which uses an unstructured, open-ended approach to the collection of data. A recent study by Mertens (1986) included open-ended written responses by deaf students as well as a follow-up discussion of responses. Her findings indicate that residential school students are more positive about their high school experience than are their peers from the mainstream. In her discussion of findings, she concludes that "the pain expressed by the students in the mainstream settings cannot be ignored," and recommends further research "to document the nature of the social experiences of hearing-impaired high school youth with a larger and more representative sample."

While Mertens' call for further research is appropriate, it may be that by meeting the criteria she suggests--that is, a larger, more representative sample--the richness of personal descriptive data would be lost. The "pain expressed by the students in the mainstream" reflects their comments in response to open-ended questions and discussion. Such data are collected primarily through qualitative field research methods, including lengthy, open-ended interviews and participant observation (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Spradley, 1981). The number of subjects in such a study is necessarily small, and it is not always possible to select them at random or insure a representative sample.

In this project, in-depth, open-ended interviews were used to learn about the mainstream and residential school experiences of a group of deaf people. The study shares many of the limitations of the Mertens (1986) study. The number of people interviewed is small (25). Since all the respondents are college graduates, their comments are retrospective and reflect the opinions of a group which is not representative of the range or level of education of deaf people nationally. Moreover, the average age of respondents at the time of the interviews was 27, which means that many of them were in high school prior to the passage of PL 94-142. Interviews with current students or recent graduates would more accurately reflect the school

experience today and the impact of this important legislation on both residential and mainstream programs.

On the other hand, the data provide a detailed description of the school experience from the perspective and in the words of the deaf person, and as such illuminate aspects of mainstream and residential programs not amenable to study through the more structured statistical methods. Since the interviews are based on recollections of past experiences, respondents were sometimes able to offer interpretations of how school experiences affected their development and current outlook on life. Additionally, the comments of these respondents can be used as a base for comparison with the experiences of deaf students who are currently in school in order to learn about the impact of legislation such as PL 94-142.

Of the 25 respondents, 14 are men and 11 are women. All respondents are graduates of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology (NTID at RIT). Twelve attended a mainstreamed high school; the other thirteen attended a school for the deaf. While some of the respondents' comments draw on elementary and junior high school experiences, most reflect experiences in high school.

The interviews were unstructured and open-ended. Respondents were asked to describe their experiences in school. Topics of discussion included classroom experiences, social interactions with other students, and participation in extracurricular activities. Respondents were encouraged to describe their experiences in detail, giving examples wherever possible. With the permission of the respondent, interviews were voiced (by the respondent or a certified interpreter) and recorded. Transcripts from interviews were coded and analyzed for recurring patterns and themes.[2]

The goal of this study was to learn about the school experience from the perspective and in the words of the deaf person. While respondents did describe positive experiences, their stories were more often about the difficulties they encountered in school. However, these findings should not be interpreted to mean that respondents

---

[2] *For more on analysis of qualitative research data, see Bogdan and Bilken (1982), "Chapter Five: Data Analysis," pp. 145-170.*

were always unhappy or that they would have preferred to attend a different kind of school.

Instead, this study should be viewed as exploratory and descriptive. The respondents' tendency to describe their school experiences in terms of the problems and challenges they faced illustrates the importance of these experiences for them. More structured interviews, or interviews which focus on successful experiences, might yield different results. It is hoped that the findings of this study can be used to identify and improve situations which may be especially difficult for deaf students in both mainstreamed and residential programs, and as a resource for those whose job it is to teach or advise deaf students in a variety of settings.

FINDINGS

In this part of the report, the perspectives of respondents on their school experiences are presented. The findings are divided into experiences in (1) mainstream and (2) residential programs.

Mainstream school experiences

Respondents recalled obstacles to academic success in the mainstreamed school. Support services were limited and students frequently had problems understanding teachers or keeping up with class discussion. Some examples:

> *Respondent:* "*It wasn't easy in school, especially from the sixth grade, because the notes were written on the blackboard and I was really frustrated because I wasn't able to sit in the front. It was really hard for me to catch up, especially the notes, cause they were talking and I'd try to do the notes and it was real difficult. My grades were starting to go down.*"

> *Interviewer:* "*Did you miss many things [in high school]?*"
> *Respondent:* "*A lot. I wish I had an interpreter. Missed a whole lot, all day at school, a lot. That's why I had a tutor there and my mother to explain it to me, everything [that] was going on. [But still] I miss the fun.*

I mean, the kids shared laughter. I didn't know what they were laughing about."

In spite of these obstacles and frustrations, respondents found ways to survive and even succeed in the mainstreamed class. Some used strategies usually defined as unorthodox or inappropriate. For example, one student skipped class; another cheated on tests. More often, however, respondents found more conventional and socially acceptable ways to succeed. Most had tutors and spent hours after class reviewing course materials. While none had professional notetakers in class, many got notes from classmates or approached their teachers for extra help. Usually, students used a combination of strategies as illustrated by the following story:

Respondent: "*When I was going to the public school, my parents were very impressed that I was able to do well... I was good with math and I would really concentrate on my teachers and be able to lip read them and sometimes I would ask students to take notes for me, but not very much. Mostly the teachers would write notes for me... After classes I would talk with the teacher as to what our homework was and the assignments or when we would be having tests or any other help and make sure that we would cover my work and the test questions. The teachers were really willing to help. But mostly also the tutors helped, they helped a lot.*"

Other factors, not controlled directly by respondents, affected their success within the mainstreamed school. For example, one person noted that he excelled in classes which consisted primarily of blackboard illustration or hands-on exercises, such as math and science. Improvements in technology helped another respondent; she was able to hear her teacher more clearly after receiving a newer model hearing aid. Two respondents credited their academic achievement to the interest and involvement of a parent. Time and a stable school environment were also important; one woman recalled that as she spent time in the school system, the teachers became more aware of her needs as a deaf learner, while three others said that changing schools was particularly difficult.

Finally, it should be noted that there was a "price" attached to many of the accommodations and strategies described above in the form of personal embarrassment or loss of time for extracurricular activities. For example, several

respondents said they were self-conscious over having to wear a hearing aid or sit at the front of the class. In one of the few cases in which an interpreter was provided, the respondent recalled that he was uncomfortable "...having the interpreter there and all the hearing students looking." Most agreed that they had less time than their hearing peers for extracurricular school activities--they were too busy getting the additional help they needed to keep up with their school work.

Almost every respondent described their social life in the mainstreamed school in terms of loneliness, rejection, and social isolation. As one person put it, "I was never really accepted, even though I wanted to be." Sometimes, the memories were of teasing or other kinds of cruelty on the part of hearing classmates as illustrated in this instance:

> *Respondent:* "*... high school, bad experience... I'm the only one deaf there and it's hard for me to get along with the people. Sometimes they would leave me alone, sometimes they'd bother me, sometimes they'd pick on me, sometimes they'd laugh at me 'cause I can't hear, my mumble-jumble, and they didn't understand what I was saying.*"

One man recalled his role as an outsider, as "somebody different." As he put it, "...some people accepted me, but they never accepted me as somebody normal--they have always accepted me as... the odd ball, or the rotten piece of the pie."

Respondents offered different explanations for their social isolation. Some described themselves as shy, while others said they had no time for socializing due to the pressures of school work. Usually, respondents had one or two hearing friends at school, although from their comments it appears that the depth of these friendships varied widely. Some examples:

> *Respondent:* "*Oh, I didn't have much social life [in a school] because I was so busy with school work and I was always studying. I had very few friends. I had maybe one or two girlfriends. I'd go out with them once in a while... I was very isolated... I'd go to school and I'd come home. I studied.*"

Respondent: "*[The hearing students] ...they'd be nice to me--they'd say "hi" and everything, but they don't... say "let's go to a party or to a movie" or something like that, outside of school. They wouldn't want me in that way to be my friend personally. Like casual like--you see them everyday, but that's about all. No personal friends, no.*"

Communication between the deaf students and their hearing peers, was usually superficial or limited. In the words of one person, "All I would hear is 'hi' and 'bye.'" Respondents were aware of what they were missing, and some expressed regret over the lack of close friends:

Respondent: "*... being deaf was hard on me because I wanted more friends. I wanted someone really close to me, you know, who I could share a lot of things [with]. So I was very lonely...*"

Respondents seldom went to parties, and when they did, communication and interaction were strained. For example:

Respondent: "*I really have a hard time in the hearing world to communicate. You know, how do you start talking, what are they talking about--I missed the whole thing. For example, at a party, hearing people are sitting there talking and I missed the whole thing... I couldn't pay attention to all. I can only pay attention to one person at one time. Talking, everybody would be talking over here and you wouldn't be able to concentrate on one person at a time. Like four people talking at the same time--Man! Whew! You don't know where it is coming from.*"

Several respondents recalled feeling embarrassed because their speech was not clear. Most could not use the telephone without a TDD. One student was able to use the phone with amplification, but was too self-conscious to do so with hearing peers. In another case, a woman recalled that boys were unwilling to put up with the strained or difficult telephone communication which resulted from an unpredictable amplification device:

Respondent: "*A lot of guys wouldn't accept me because I can't hear on the phone. It's very frustrating for me to hear on the phone.*"

Interviewer: "*You did okay when I talked to you.*"

Respondent: "*That's because I had a hearing device on my hearing aid. At other times, it never worked. A lot of guys would say, "Oh, forget it, I ain't going to talk to her if she can't hear on the phone.*"

Respondents were often aware of the extra effort required of their hearing peers for communication with a deaf person. Based on their experience, the most important requirements for successful interaction were a positive attitude, motivation and patience. For example:

Respondent: "*I guess you really can't force people to be friends with you. You know... to communicate with the deaf... it's hard. You know, you have to put more effort into the communication... It's so easy to just sit back and gab with your friends; but with me they have to really pour more effort to communicate if they really want to be friends. And a lot of times, a lot of people don't want to be bothered.*"

Respondents described a variety of situations, factors and strategies which were helpful in dealing with the social isolation they experienced in school. For example, one man relied on a hearing sibling for friends, although this was not a substitute for having friends of his own. Several respondents formed relationships with hearing peers through community activities and organizations, including church, summer camp, and Girl Scouts. These friendships were sometimes helpful in breaking the ice at school. In the following example, a man recalls the support of boys from his neighborhood in adjusting to the public school--they were familiar with his voice and he with theirs, which facilitated communication between them and helped him face his other hearing classmates. Equally important, they were his friends:

Respondent: "*I remember the very first day of school [in] second grade. It was quite an experience. I went up the aisle and classmates were looking at me with this thing in my ear--I used to have a box with one hearing aid--and it didn't bother me one bit... I knew some of the kids in the class because they were down the street neighbors so I was fortunate to*

have a couple of friends who helped me. I could hear them, they could hear me."

Just as time helped students adjust academically to the mainstreamed environment, respondents said their social life improved over time as hearing students became accustomed to them and vice versa. As one person put it, "Things got better because I went to school with these kids... I grew up with them." At the same time, change was especially disruptive of relationships with hearing peers. For example, one man, who moved from one public school to another when his junior high school was closed down, recalled that "...it was really, really awkward for me--I lost all my good friends ...and had to start all over again."

As noted earlier, respondents said they did not have as much time for extracurricular activities as their hearing peers due to the demands of school work. However, since so much of social life in high school revolves around these kinds of activities, they sometimes participated, even if it meant a reduction in the time or energy spent on studies. Some respondents joined clubs which did not place heavy emphasis on group conversation. Others joined sports activities as a way of meeting and interacting with hearing peers. Sometimes participation required courage, and the determination to continue in spite of anxiety and possible rejection as illustrated by the following story:

Respondent: "I joined the tennis team in the spring and it was... a very anxious moment for me... My parents... suggested that I do it. I was seeing some counselors at the time and they suggested that I do it. They said, "Do it, even if it makes you nauseous, even if it makes you sick, go force yourself and try." And I did. Technically, I got eliminated from the team, but the coach liked me so much that he kept me on the team as a reserve. I asked him if I proved myself would he put me in the starting line up. And so, again, it was a struggle, but I got myself into the starting line up and I began to get some recognition.... things were changing a little bit, people began to see, although it took four years, they began to say "Hey, he's not such a bad guy after all."

Sometimes there were other deaf students in the school system. In these cases, the deaf students offered each other support and the pleasure of easy communication. Some examples:

Respondent: "*During high school, there was another deaf woman there... That helped me a lot to know that there was another deaf person with their background... She was a senior and I was a junior--[sometimes]... we were able to take a class together. We had a good time and we were able to communicate...*"

Respondent: "*[The] high school... served different districts in the city, so alot of [deaf] students would come from different parts of the city... We would have our own homeroom... From Freshman to Senior. We had a homeroom teacher who was also a counselor and tutors and so on. So this is where most of my friends are, and I didn't have many hearing friends--I had a lot of deaf friends.*"

For these respondents, contact with other deaf students in high school was important. The bonds of shared experiences and communication were strong enough to overcome differences in age and class assignment. Other respondents met deaf peers outside of school. For example, one person joined a club for deaf youth:

Respondent: "*We had a social life at the weekend. There was like "teenagers club," so I would go there and rap with them, so I was never excluded from the deaf. I was always involved with the deaf community in many different ways.*"

For another man, mainstreaming resulted in a "Catch 22." He met some deaf boys but was unable to communicate with them because they used sign language and he had been brought up in the oral method. As a result, he was an outsider to both worlds:

Respondent: "*My parents had a good friend that had deaf children, so I would go over and meet them. They went to [deaf school]. They are very manual communication. They always depend on signs and fingerspelling. I wish I was like them. I was not like them because I was such an oral person. They weren't oral persons, and they were signing away. I didn't understand them because I didn't really have a complete understanding, I didn't have the knowledge of signs. How could I*

communicate with the two deaf brothers? It was very hard to communicate--most of the time we would just play."

Several respondents reflected on the long term impact of their experiences in the mainstreamed school. For example, one woman, who later said that interaction with other deaf people is important for personal and social development, expressed regret at the lack of opportunities to meet deaf peers during high school:

Respondent: "*I did not have many friends. I was the only deaf there. And not having met any other deaf people, I did not really understand myself either.*"

Another respondent described himself as having a "social handicap," the effects of which had remained with him through the present:

Respondent: "*I did not know how to hang around with the hearing people. They constantly make fun of me, they tried so many times to put up a fight with me. Several times I was involved in a fight, street fight. I really don't have much of a bitter [feeling] at all now at what happened in the past. You know, I just feel sorry for them because they didn't understand me as well as I didn't understand them... So I think that had a lot to do with what's happening to me as the person I am now... That's the person I am... I've become shy, I learned to be shy as I was growing up. I learned to be quiet. Most of my friends today are complaining that I keep it to myself too much... Many times I like to talk out interpersonal relations, insights. Many times I can't. I don't trust them. I don't know, that's the way I am. I don't get close enough to any[one] who is willing to listen or share with me.*"

Sometimes even "success" takes its toll. The man who gained acceptance through participation on the school tennis team describes the long term impact of this experience as follows:

Respondent: "*I felt... hopeless after graduating from high school...*"

Interviewer: "*Why did you feel hopeless?*"

Respondent: "*Well, I just didn't see a future. I just felt that, yeah, it took me all this time in high school to get some recognition, but [now] I felt that I didn't think I would get a good paying job. I thought that I would be put aside and [I had to say to myself] "Okay, here we go again, start revving your engine and start pounding on the wall..." I think it was that way all my life and [I just felt]... can somebody give me a break, you know, there has got to be a break somewhere.*"

Given these experiences, one might expect the respondents to regret their experiences in the mainstreamed shcool, or wish they had been sent to a school for the deaf. While they frequently expressed a desire for opportunities to meet other deaf students, increased support services and greater sensitivity on the part of hearing peers, teachers and administrators, there was also a sense of accomplishment in their descriptions of life in the mainstreamed school. In fact, they were often proud of their ability to survive and succeed in spite of the obstacles they faced and sacrifices they made. As one man put it, "I felt more comfortable at the public school--they had a better education for me... despite the lack of social life."

In summary, respondents who attended mainstreamed schools encountered obstacles to their academic and social integration ranging from inadequate support services to teachers and classmates who were unaware of or unresponsive to their special communication needs. They used a range of formal and informal strategies in an effort to overcome these challenges with varied success.

Residential school experiences

Respondents who attended schools for the deaf generally had much less to say about their school experiences than did those from mainstream programs. Their responses were much shorter and they rarely offered examples or interpretations of their experiences. However, their responses were fairly consistent in several areas, as described below.

Respondents from residential programs frequently expressed concern and disappointment over the quality of the education they received at the school for the deaf. Several respondents, who had attended schools using the oral method of

communication, said they spent too much time on communication skills and not enough on course content. For example:

> *Interviewer:* "*Did you feel that you got a good education at the deaf school? Was it good for academics?*"
>
> *Respondent:* "*Not really satisfying at that school because most of them did pretty much concentrate on speech. And then the other courses are like English, math, history--you know, the basics. And that's where I was really poor, in those areas... [because] I concentrated on speech so much...*"

Sometimes the emphasis on oral communication reached proportions of abuse--several respondents recalled the use of punishment with students who were caught using sign language:

> *Respondent:* "*I never knew sign language until I went to NTID.*"
>
> *Interviewer:* "*The other kids at school, they did not sign, not at all?*"
>
> *Respondent:* "*Right. If we tried to sign, we would get our hands slapped... hand movement, they wouldn't allow us to do that.*"

Others were critical of what they called the "lower level of education" at the school for the deaf. By this, they generally meant that courses weren't as complete or advanced as similar courses taught at "hearing," or mainstream schools. For example:

> *Respondent:* "*It [curriculum at school for the deaf] was really slow, and it became boring for me. I wanted to be able to be equivalent to the hearing kids in the high school and be able to move along real fast... I mean, in a hearing school they were doing geometry and in the deaf school they were only doing algebra, so I had to do stuff on my own.*"

In another instance, a respondent concluded that the academic training at the school for the deaf was inadequate after she began college and was able to compare the two educational environments:

Respondent: "*When I was in [high school], I thought it was good. My class was exceptional. Many of the teachers loved the class of '75, good kids and so on. Anyway, when I [came to college], I realized that I didn't have good school background or foundation. I didn't. For example, like taking biology for one year, I only finished a quarter of the book [in high school for the deaf]. Then next year, chemistry, again about a quarter. We had to take regents and naturally, we failed. Looking back, we should have finished the book or the teacher should have picked the important parts that would give us a good foundation when we transferred to [college]. It was like a sock in the face, WOW! Really awkward, I didn't know this [or] that. Compared with my other deaf friends who went to hearing schools, [they had] a lot more of an academic foundation. I thought, I wish I had that too. It would have helped me to understand the complexity of courses here.*"

Respondents from schools for the deaf had fewer complaints about the quality of social interaction with peers than did the respondents from mainstream programs. For example, one woman described out of class activities as one of the best things about the school for the deaf:

Interviewer: "*Can you give me an example... of what was really good [about the school for the deaf]?*"

Respondent: "*Well, let's see... School activities during the school year, like plays, drama... the yearbook, all the other outside activities. [That's what] I enjoyed the most.*"

On the other hand, attending a day program at a school for the deaf may present special obstacles to social interaction with peers. One respondent, who traveled two and a half hours each way to school, said that the lengthy commute prevented him from participating in after school activities both at school and at home:

Respondent: "*I missed my day, I miss my outside activity before the sun goes down. I wanted to be involved with the family and I didn't have any*

opportunity to meet my hometown friends or different activities... you had to wait 'til weekends."

Generally, however, the potential for peer interaction was greater at the school for the deaf than in mainstream programs. Sometimes, shared experiences led to a sense of camaraderie at the residential school. For example, at one school where signing was forbidden, students found a bond in "secret signing:"

Respondent: "*When the principal leaves... we'd start signing to each other... and when they come back, then we hide and we start to go back to talking.*"

Some residents experienced their first sense of community and identification with other deaf people at this time. For example, several people spoke about the institution as another kind of a family:

Respondent: "*I went to the [residential school]. I was home four times a year. I didn't see my family much, but I felt that I belonged to the family at the institution. And still, in my heart I belong to the family at home, too.*"

Others discovered a sense of "identity" through interactions with deaf peers. While the family at the institution dos not necessarily replace the family at home, over years of separation, a shift in identity can take place as illustrated in the following story:

Respondent: "*One of the bad things is that my parents did not communicate with me and that they would plan to send me to school for the deaf and that they would tell me that I would be living there, be going to school there, they just said "Come on, we're driving to [name of city]." We drove to [city] and they said, "This is the place where you're going to be. Goodbye!" And that was the most thing in my memory that stands out the most and I will never forget about that. That experience terrified me up until about the age of 8 or 9 when I started to appreciate more going to school because I started to develop more of a identity with my deafness... At ages 3, 4, 5, 6... I didn't recognize the difference between me, my parents, my brothers and sisters or my neighbor because most of the time we'd just be playing with things and it didn't require communication.*

> *We'd just play hide and go seek, basketball, baseball, things like that. So it didn't bother me until I began to recognize that I couldn't communicate and then I would say "Stop, what are you saying?" ... I needed to put a lot of time into communication. My needs were sort of separated from theirs, and my needs were satisfied at the school for the deaf. I was very enthusiastic to go to the school for the deaf and I didn't feel bad being separated from home when I was about 9 or 10 years old."*

For another respondent, this sense of separation and the acquisition of a deaf identity were more abrupt. As she put it, "I didn't understand why I was different until I went to [school for the deaf]."

Often this sense of identity and community had a lasting impact. In the following quotation, a respondent draws connections between the friendships he made at the residential school, deaf culture, and family:

> *Respondent: "Many people think that deaf and hearing are the same. It's true, yes, but it's different. Deaf culture is more deaf. [If] you're deaf, [and] I'm deaf--we're family... One of my questions is how often do you see some of your old high school classmates?... You don't see them for a long, long time, right? How often do I see my old classmates? Often! Compared to your [hearing] culture and compared to my culture, it's different... Deaf culture are always more involved with family, we're deaf family...*

In summary, respondents who attended school for the deaf frequently complained about the quality of the education they received at these institutions. On the other hand, they expressed fewer concerns about the social life at school, and in fact described several instances in which they experienced participation and camaraderie in the school environment. In addition, several respondents described the residential school as a kind of family in which they found growing identity with other deaf people.

DISCUSSION

In this part of the report, findings from each section are reviewed and common themes described. In addition, recommendations for program development and further research are made. The discussion concludes with observations about themes which are common to or cross over the experiences of respondents from both mainstream and residential schools, and suggestions for how these shared experiences may impact on the long term development of the deaf person.

Findings relevant to mainstreamed programs

Several themes emerge from a review of the experiences of respondents from mainstream programs. First, these respondents described many obstacles to their academic success in the mainstream. Some of these obstacles can be resolved with appropriate technical supports. Others present a greater challenge. For example, certain aspects of class participation, such as informal conversation, are often inaccessible to the deaf student even with adequate support services.

Second, respondents went to great lengths in order to survive and succeed academically in the mainstream. They used a variety of strategies to this end ranging from unorthodox methods such as skipping class and cheating on tests, to the more conventional use of special equipment, tutors and additional out of class study.

Third, respondents paid a price for participation in the mainstream. For example, they devoted more time to school work than their hearing peers and spent after school hours with tutors and therapists. They were subjected to embarrassment due to the special accommodations they required and had to endure the curiosity, even harassment, of hearing classmates. Perhaps the highest price of all was their social isolation. Respondents felt like outsiders in school. They were rarely included in parties or other kinds of social events. Conversations and friendships were often limited or superficial. While they used a variety of strategies to make friends or learn to live with the loneliness, the isolation described by these respondents was a critical part of their experience.

Given these findings, several recommendations can be made regarding the mainstreaming of deaf students. First, mainstream school programs may need

additional information and funding if they are to provide deaf students with appropriate support services. For example, inservice training which includes practical strategies may be helpful for teachers and administrators who want to learn more about the needs of deaf students. In particular, emphasis should be placed on using this knowledge in day to day interactions with students, as well as in the formulation of school policy.

Second, it may be helpful to provide hearing and deaf students with information about some of the most common problems encountered by deaf students in mainstream educational settings, and ideas for how to resolve them. For example, informal classroom interaction seems to be a problem area, as does participation in school social activities. Given the comments of the respondents in this study, a positive attitude, motivation and patience should be highlighted as especially important for successful communication and interaction, both in and out of class.

Third, deaf students may need emotional support to deal with the social isolation they so often encountered in mainstream settings. Counselors can play a central role in developing these support services. In addition to the counselor-student model, peer support may be particularly helpful. Deaf students should be encouraged to form support groups with other deaf students in their school system, or if necessary, with students from other systems or districts. These support groups would create an opportunity for deaf students to meet, and provide a forum for discussion of the difficulties encountered in the mainstreamed environment, as well as strategies for survival and success.

Fourth, much can be learned from mainstreamed deaf students about "what works." For example, from the comments of the respondents in this study, a stable educational environment may be critical to the academic and social adjustment of mainstreamed deaf students. It is recommended that further studies be done in which deaf students are encouraged to discuss their experiences in the mainstream, in detail, with emphasis on those strategies and circumstances which they feel are especially helpful to them.

Fifth, we need to rethink our most basic assumptions about mainstreaming. For example, were the respondents from these kinds of programs really mainstreamed? How much participation in the range of social and academic activities in school is

enough for a student to be considered mainstreamed? Are students in "special" classes or homerooms mainstreamed? It may be that there are several dimensions to mainstreaming, ranging from access to information in the classroom to full acceptance and participation in social activities with non-disabled peers. Additionally, some mainstream experiences may be easier to effect than others. For example, the comments of respondents in this study indicate that access to information is easier to accomplish than social interactions with non-disabled peers.

Findings relevant to residential programs

One of the most troubling aspects of the findings from interviews with respondents from residential programs is the lack of detail and density to their responses. Perhaps these respondents were uncomfortable discussing their feelings with a hearing interviewer. Perhaps the presence of the interpreter, intended as a facilitator, was a barrier to conversation. On the other hand, it may be that these respondents had so little to say because their school experiences were by and large unremarkable; that is, they did not feel unusually deprived or enriched by their school experience and, therefore, had less to say in general. As one respondent from this group put it, "[school] was a normal experience."

Even so, several themes did emerge from their comments. The first is that respondents were not entirely satisfied with the quality of the education they received at the school for the deaf. They felt that "hearing" schools offered a better education, and as a result, felt deprived because they did not have access to the same quality of instruction. This finding is interesting because it parallels so closely some of the research described in the Introduction to this report, especially those studies which examine differences in instructional processes between mainstreamed and special classes. The respondents in this study were very much aware of differences in instruction between mainstreamed and self-contained programs.

This finding raises several questions about academic programs at residential schools. For example, are academic curricula neglected in these programs in order to give greater time and attention to the development of communication skills, and if so, is this prioritization in the best interests of students? Should teachers of deaf students receive primary training in special instructional methods or in the content area? How much of the academic achievement differences between students from residential and

mainstreamed programs are related to differences in instructional processes? Some studies have begun to examine these questions (e.g., Kluwin and Moores, 1985; Mertens and Kluwin, 1986). It is recommended that research continue to address these and other questions relative to the academic development of deaf students, and that every attempt be made to use the findings of such research to improve the academic achievement of students in residential as well as mainstreamed settings.

Second, respondents from residential schools seemed to enjoy a greater sense of participation, camaraderie and interaction with peers than did respondents from the mainstream. Support groups for deaf students in mainstream programs may find useful models in the natural peer networks that develop within schools for the deaf. Additionally, peer support programs for deaf people of different ages and in a variety of situations may be helpful in promoting a sense of self-worth and identity which is otherwise unattainable or very difficult to achieve within the larger hearing culture. Further research is recommended which explores the role of peer interaction in the social and emotional development of deaf people, as well as the impact of residential school life on relationships within the family and home community.

General observations

In addition to these specific suggestions, two general observations can be made about the experience of respondents in mainstream and residential school programs.

"The trade." There is an element of "trading" one kind of growth for another which runs through respondents' descriptions of their school experiences. In general, this trade seems to be one of academic versus social opportunity. For example, the respondents from mainstream programs often settled for restricted or superficial peer interaction in return for what they perceived to be enhanced academic opportunities. Respondents from schools for the deaf, on the other hand, had few complaints about the opportunity for social interaction with peers. However, they were less satisfied with the quality of the education available to them at these schools.

In either case, "the trade" places the deaf student in a "no win" situation, since both academic and social growth are essential to the total development of the individual, and there is significant overlap between the two areas. For example, students who feel socially unaccepted by their peers are less likely to participate in class discussion

or learning activities which require a partner. In order to take full advantage of the range of formal and informal classroom instruction, students must be able to tie into the social network within the classroom. As noted earlier in this paper, this step is particularly difficult for deaf students in mainstream educational environments.

Similarly, everyone has the right to the best possible education, and students who feel they are being offered a "second class" education are likely to think of themselves as "second class." The respondents from residential programs who felt they did not get a good education graduated with a special "handicap." They believed that they were one step behind everyone else, including deaf students from mainstream programs. The issue here is not only whether or not they are correct in this assumption, but the impact of such a belief on their self esteem.

"The hidden curriculum." It is generally accepted that schools do more than provide students with an academic education. In fact, one of the primary functions of schools is the socialization of youth into the values and culture of the adult society. Sometimes this means learning a social role, or negotiating a particular identity.

Deaf students learn more than the three "R's" in school. In particular, they learn about what it means to be deaf in a hearing world. Both mainstream and residential schools play critical roles in implementing this "hidden curriculum." Mainstream settings generally teach deaf students how to become "outsiders." Through interactions with hearing students, teachers and others, deaf students discover that they are different and learn to manage what Goffman (1963) has called the "stigmatized" social identity which the so called "normals" have assigned to them. Similarly, residential schools offer the deaf student an alternative community in which deafness is not a "handicap" and the deaf person is an accepted member of the social network. Together, these environments form a kind of dialectic, or push-pull movement, in which the deaf person is alienated from one kind of interaction and attracted to another. In combination with experiences within other social environments, including family, work, and community, they generate as well as maintain the boundaries between deaf and hearing cultures.[3]

---

[3] *For more on this topic, see Foster (1987) "Social Alienation and Peer Identification: a Dialectical Model of the Development of Deaf Community." Paper to be presented at the 1987 Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Chicago, August 17-21.*

In conclusion, both mainstream and residential programs have long term as well as immediate impact on deaf students in the areas of academic and social development. The comments of respondents indicate that there are advantages and disadvantages inherent in each model. For example, the selection of one program over another may involve "trading" academic for social opportunity. In particular, it is suggested that school experiences play a critical role in the socialization of deaf people and the development of deaf community. Further research is recommended which explores the long term impact of different kinds of school environments in addition to the more immediate consequences of participation for students.

References

Antia, S. D. (1982) "Social interaction of partially mainstreamed hearing-impaired children." American Annals of the Deaf, 127 (1), pp. 18-25.

Allen, T. and Osborn, T. (1984) "Academic integration of hearing-impaired students: demographic, handicapping, and achievement factors." American Annals of the Deaf, 129 (2), pp. 100-113.

Bogdan, R. and Biklen, S. (1982) Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

Bogdan, R. and Taylor, S. (1975) Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Phenomenological Approach to the Social Sciences, New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Farrugia, D. and Austin, G. (1980) "A study of social emotional adjustment patterns of hearing impaired students in different educational settings." American Annals of the Deaf, 125, (5), pp. 535-541.

Foster, S. (1987) "Social alienation and peer identification: A dialectical model of the development of deaf community." Paper to be presented at the 1987 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Chicago, August 17-21.

Garreston, M. (1977) "The residential school." The Deaf American, 29, pp. 19-22.

Goffman, E. (1963) Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity, Englewood-Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kluwin, T. and Moores, D. (1985) "The effects of integration on the mathematics achievement of hearing impaired adolescents." Exceptional Children, 52, (2), pp.153-160.

Ladd, G., Munson, H. and Miller, J. (1984) "Social integration of deaf adolescents in secondary-level mainstreamed programs." Exceptional Children, 50, (5), pp. 420-428.

Mertens, D. (in press) "A conceptual model of student placement and outcomes for the hearing-impaired student." In Moores, D., Meadow, K. (eds), Research in the Educational and Developmental Aspects of Deafness. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet College Press.

Mertens, D. (1986) "Social development for the hearing-impaired high school youth." Paper presented at the 1986 meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Mertens, D. and Kluwin, T. (1986) "Academic and social interaction for hearing-impaired high school students." Paper presented at the 1986 meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Reich, C., Hambleton, D., and Houldin, B. (1977) "The integration of hearing-impaired-children in regular classrooms." American Annals of the Deaf, 122, pp. 534-543.

Spradley, J. P. (1979) The Ethnographic Interview, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.